

3-1956

Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: March Report and April Sermons

Herald of Truth

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs

Recommended Citation

Herald of Truth, "Churches of Christ Salute You with a Herald of Truth: March Report and April Sermons" (1956). *Herald of Truth Documents*. Paper 93.
http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs/93

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Herald of Truth Records at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Herald of Truth Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU. For more information, please contact dc@acu.edu.

ap '56
218-222

LIBRARY
ABILENE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
ABILENE, TEXAS

Churches of Christ

salute you



APRIL SERMONS AND
MARCH REPORT -- 1956

Eugene L. Long
726 Jeanette — 4-8739
Abilene, Texas

HERALD OF TRUTH

CHURCH AND STATE, NO. 1

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

Radio Sermon No. 218

April 1, 1956

In the twenty-second chapter of Matthew we have these words, "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him (Christ) in His talk. And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites? Shew Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:15-21).

When Christ came into the world, Palestine was a Roman province, and Caesar was its master. The Jews were a proud and independent people, and it was galling to them to have the yoke of a foreign despot about their necks. Many of the Jews advocated war as a means of breaking the Roman yoke. It was with this situation in mind that the Pharisees asked Christ, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar?"

They did not ask this question for information. They sought to get Him into a dilemma. If He should advise that they pay tribute to Caesar they could twist these words to mean that He advocated the worshiping of the emperor, for the Romans called him Divine Caesar. This would turn all the Jews against Him. If He should advise them not to pay tribute to Caesar, the Pharisees would report Him to the Romans as a disloyal subject of the emperor.

Christ's answer to the question, "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar" is a classic. It emphasizes that Christians are citizens of two worlds and that they have a twofold obligation. Jesus expressed the duties of this dual citizenship in the words, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

There is no danger of conflict between our loyalties to God and country as long as we have a free church in a free state. But when the government seeks to restrain and control churches, or when a denomination attempts to dominate the affairs of state, a violent conflict of loyalties is the result. This condition never arises where there is no organic relation of Christian church and civil government. The two institutions should complement each other in the service of humanity by each doing its own work and respecting the other.

When the church was first established the Roman state made every effort to suppress it. Nero, Domitian, Trajan and Valerian bathed the Roman Empire with the blood of Christians. Under Diocle-

tian, who became emperor in 284, church buildings were destroyed, Bibles were burned, and evangelists were imprisoned and tortured. The persecution of Diocletian represented the last vain effort of the Roman state to destroy the church. As history proved before and after, the state could not conquer Christianity by force.

The emperor Constantine learned this lesson and so he set out to conquer the church by collaboration and corruption. He professed an acceptance of Christianity and in the year 311 he issued an edict of toleration to Christians "on condition that nothing is done by them contrary to discipline." In 312 the famous Edict of Milan was issued which provided "that liberty of worship shall not be denied to any, but that the mind and will of every individual shall be free to manage divine affairs according to his own choice" (*History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, London, Blackie & Son, 1929, p. 481). It is generally conceded by scholars that Constantine's actions were primarily motivated, not by sympathy for Christianity, but by political considerations. He made religion an engine of state policy for the purpose of unifying his complex empire. As Pontifex Maximus of the non-Christian state religion, he of course had exclusive power to control its administration and determine its course. Constantine showed no hesitation in exercising the same control of the newly recognized Christian religion and according it the same favor previously enjoyed by its predecessor.

With the favors thus accorded Christianity by the state there came the price which religion must always pay for state favors—state interference in religious affairs; Constantine called and dismissed church meetings, and enforced unity of belief and practice. Thus the church was put in a straight jacket and made to do the bidding of the state.

This unscriptural marriage between church and state corrupted the church. Whereas she had, until so recently, been the persecuted, she now asked the state to persecute those who disagreed with her. For example, when Nestor was consecrated Bishop of Constantinople, he preached a sermon to the Emperor Theodosius in which he said: "Give me, my Prince, the earth purged of heretics, and I will give you heaven as a recompense. Assist me in destroying heretics, and I will assist you in vanquishing the Persians" (*Religious Liberty: An Inquiry*, M. Searle Bates, New York and London, International Missionary Council, 1945, p. 134).

These pleas were heeded by the emperors. Those branded as heretics by the state church were forbidden to build church buildings, hold religious assemblies, or teach their convictions even privately. Pagans were required to hear instructions in the churches, were subject to exile if they refused baptism, and to death if, after receiving baptism, they lapsed into pagan rites.

Leading churchmen of that day tried to justify these coercive measures. Tertullian argued that, "Heretics may properly be compelled, not enticed, to duty. Obstinacy must be corrected, not coaxed"

(*Ibid.*, *An Inquiry*, pp. 137, 138). Augustine of Hippo argued that compulsion in such cases was benevolent, "for what is a worse killer of the soul than freedom to err" (*Ibid.*, p. 139). Augustine's influence on the course of religious liberty and the relationship of church and state can hardly be measured. As a result of his teaching, "The principle that religious unity ought to be imposed in one way or another dominates the whole of the Christian Middle Ages and finds a concise and rigorous sanction in civil as well as in ecclesiastical legislation" (*Religious Liberty*, by Francesco Ruffini, London, William & Norgate, 1912, p. 36). Because of Augustine, more than any other person, "the Medieval Church was intolerant, was the source and author of persecution, justified and defended the most violent measures which could be taken against those who differed from it" (*The Christian Church and Liberty*, by Alexander Carlyle, London, J. Clarke, 1924, p. 96).

The partnership between the church and state continued to the point that the church dictated to the state. Bishop Gelasius I, writing to the emperor in 496, staked out the church's mighty claim of the future. He said, "There are two things, most august emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the priesthood and the royal power. Of these two the priests carry the greater weight, because they will have to render account in the divine judgment even for the kings of men" (*Religious Liberty: An inquiry*, pp. 135, 136).

After Rome fell in 476 the church grew in power until it claimed, not equality, but superiority to the states. The claim first made by Gelasius, and symbolized by Leo's crowning of Charlemagne, became the church's accepted principle of its relationship to the state in the Middle Ages. "The union of church and state, as viewed by the church, was now a union of the state in the church" (*Church, State, and Freedom*, by Leo Pfeffer, The Beacon Press, Boston, 1953, p. 15). The classic statement of the church's view of the relationship was made by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century in these words: "The highest aim of mankind is eternal happiness. To this chief aim of mankind all earthly aims must be subordinated. This chief aim cannot be realized through human direction alone but must obtain divine assistance which is only to be obtained through the Church. Therefore the State, through which earthly aims are obtained, must be subordinated to the Church. Church and State are as two swords which God has given to Christendom for protection: both of these, however, are given by him to the Pope and the temporal sword by him handed to the rulers of the State" (*Religious Liberty: An Inquiry*, p. 140).

Probably the most dramatic and well-known chapter in the church's struggle for supremacy over the state is the head-on contest between Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) and Emperor Henry IV in the 11th century. On Hildebrand's ascendancy to the headship of his church, he reasserted the claim of papal supremacy. Declaring that "the Pontiff alone is able to bind and to loose, to give and take away, according to the merits of each man, empires, kingdoms, duchies, countships, and the possessions of all men," he ordered

Henry to conform to his decree that bishops receive their staff of office from him and not from the Emperor. Henry refused to comply, and Hildebrand excommunicated him. The Emperor at first remained defiant, but his defiance did not last. Henry's nobles gave him a year to obtain release from excommunication and warned him that failure would result in his losing the throne.

The king crossed the Alps and followed Hildebrand to his castle at Canossa, where for three days he stood in the snow of the courtyard, barefooted and dressed in penitential white, until the churchman finally admitted him to an audience and released him from his excommunication.

Innocent III reiterated the church's claim of supremacy over princes. He informed the Patriarch of Constantinople that "the Lord left to Peter (the Pope) the government not of the Church only but of the whole world" (Church, State, and Freedom, by Pfeffer, p. 16). During Innocent's lifetime he was supreme temporal chief of the Italian state, the Spanish peninsula, the Scandinavian states, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Servia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, and the Christian state of Syria (Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., XIII, p. 695).

When a conflict arose between Boniface VIII and King Philip the Fair of France, Philip convoked the first French States-General, with representation from clergy, nobility and commoners. When the States-General pledged its support to the king, Boniface issued his famous bull, *Unam Sanctam*, containing the words, "We declare, state, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff" (Documents of the Christian Church, Henry Bettenson, Oxford University Press, New York & London, 1947, p. 163).

In the 14th century one great voice was raised against the union of church and state. Marsilius of Padua wrote, "The rights of citizens are independent of the faith they profess; and no man may be punished for his religion" (Acton, "History of Freedom in Christianity," in *Essays on Freedom and Power*, 1949, p. 65)... He taught that eternal salvation could not be achieved by compulsion, and that the church has no right to mete out physical punishment for heresy.

But the spirit that pervaded the Middle Ages reflected the thinking not of Marsilius but of Augustine and Aquinas, who taught that salvation could be achieved through compulsion, and that persecution of heretics was not merely the right but the holy duty of the church. Thus, for example, in Iceland in the year 1000, the entire population was made Christian by law, and all who had not previously accepted baptism were required to do so. The knights who conquered the Baltic seacoast likewise forced Christianity on the natives, in order to insure their salvation in eternity (See Bates, pp. 142, 143 and Pfeffer, p. 18). The blood baths and massacres suffered by the Jews at the hands of the Crusaders were motivated partly to effect their conversion to Christianity.

But the major victims of the church-sanctioned religious persecution were the people who were looked upon as unorthodox Christians. Augustine preached that heresy was worse than murder, because it destroyed the soul rather than the body. Aquinas added that counterfeiting of God's truth was worse than forging the prince's coin (which was punishable by death), and that "the sin of heresy separates man from God more than all other sins and, therefore, is to be punished more severely" (Bates, pp. 142, 143). Fortified by the justifications of Augustine and Aquinas, the church developed its laws against heresy. The state cooperated by reviving the Roman law, and in one country after another, death was prescribed as the penalty of heresy.

In the second quarter of the 13th century the Inquisition was established. "Its purpose was the discovery and extermination of heresy, and the chief responsibility for its operation was assigned to the Dominican order. The Dominicans traveled from place to place. Arriving in a town, they addressed its inhabitants, called on them to confess if they were heretics, or to denounce those whom they knew to be heretics. A period of grace, not exceeding one month, was given. Those who confessed were treated with varying degrees of leniency, ranging from dispensation of all punishment to exemption from the death penalty.

"At the end of the grace period, the inquisition proper began. The procedure was secret and arbitrary. External acts of piety and professions of faith were disregarded. No ordinary rules of procedure or evidence were applied. The accused was surprised by a sudden summons and imprisoned on suspicion. The judge and the prosecutor were the same person, and the accused was presumed to be guilty. While he had the right to demand a written account of the offense with which he was charged, he could not learn the names of the witnesses who denounced him. If a witness who testified against the accused retracted his testimony, he was subject to punishment, but his evidence stood.

"If the accused confessed and denounced relatives or friends, he became reconciled to the church and escaped the extreme penalties. If he did not, he was to be subjected to torture, which was officially approved by the church in the bull *Ad extirpanda* issued by Innocent IV in 1252. In addition, it was permissible for the Inquisitor to torture witnesses in order to obtain evidence against the accused. There was, of course, no lawyer for the defense; anyone daring to defend the accused would himself have been held guilty of heresy.

"In view of this procedure, it is hardly surprising that no one was ever acquitted. Indeed, though the authoritative textbook for Inquisitors set forth a formula for complete acquittal, it warned that the formula should never or very rarely be employed. Trial was inevitably followed by sentence, which ranged from penances and fasting to life imprisonment and death by fire. Serious punishment always was accompanied by confiscation of the accused's property for division between the secular authorities and the church; and the

operation of the Inquisition became highly profitable for both prince and pontiff" (Church, State, and Freedom, Leo Pfeffer, p. 19).

So far as we have been able to determine from our reading of the New Testament, the Lord did not authorize His church to persecute men who disagreed with her, or members who forsook her. In writing to Titus the apostle Paul said, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject," and in his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul said, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him," but no apostle ever gave instructions that such a person should be punished physically (See Titus 3:10 and II Thessalonians 3:14). In fact, the Lord says of a man from whom the church has been forced to withdraw its fellowship, "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (II Thessalonians 3:6, 15). After reading these sacred Scriptures, can you conceive of Christ being pleased with His professed followers when they imprison and torture men whose convictions are different from their own?

It is very serious for any organized religious group to stamp its teaching with the label of infallibility, and then brand as heretics all who disagree. The highest religious court in Israel brought this charge against Christ, and by enlisting the aid of the state the Sanhedrin put Him to death. Paul's life was endangered a number of times by religionists who branded him as a heretic. To Felix, the Roman governor, he said, "I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). If the state had connived with the Pharisees, they would have taken Paul's life.

It is impossible for the church to imprison and punish heretics until it turns the state into an engine of church policy. It is as wrong for the state to become a tool for the church as it is for the church to be made an instrument of the state. The Lord established the church to proclaim the gospel throughout the world, and He ordained the state to punish criminals and to maintain peace. To unite church and state is to disobey the Lord and to endanger the rights of every citizen in our land.

CHURCH AND STATE, NO. 2

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

Radio Sermon No. 219

April 8, 1956

When Christ stood before Pilate, He said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all" (John 18:36-38).

After the Roman governor questioned Christ, and listened to His accusers face to face, he announced, "I find no fault in this man." And from that moment Pilate sought to release the Lord, "but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar" (John 19:12). The Jewish leaders tried to persuade Pilate that Christ was Caesar's rival, and that His kingdom would be a threat to the Roman government. But the Lord refuted this charge when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

In this statement the Son of God has forever established the principle of the separation of church and state. The state has nothing to fear from the church because the Lord's kingdom is spiritual. Its work pertains to the souls of men, and it must not dominate nor interfere with the affairs of the state. It may leaven the state for good by teaching its individual citizens, but it has no divine right to dictate civil policies. Its sole power in this world is a godly influence upon the lives of men and women. The church of Christ does not need the sword of man because it has the sword of the Spirit. As Paul said to the church at Corinth, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:4, 5).

The kingdom of Christ was established to change the thoughts of men, and this divine work is done through the proclamation of the gospel. Its message is the power of God unto salvation, and it needs no other power. It has no scriptural right to enlist the aid of the state in an effort to extend its borders.

Every zealous Christian has a burning desire to spread the gospel of Christ, and this is natural for Christianity makes missionaries of men. This is one of its divine characteristics, but this trait must not be abused. We must contend earnestly for the faith, but our contending must be limited to the field of moral persuasion. Our zeal must never lead us to the use of force because compulsion can never lead to true conversion.

We lament the fact that some professed Christians have had a zeal for God which was not according to knowledge. As Paul said of Israel, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). A man as great and as good as Martin Luther let his zeal obscure his spiritual vision. On one occasion he said, "Heretics are not to be disputed with, but

to be condemned unheard, and whilst they perish by fire, the faithful ought to pursue the evil to its source, and bathe their hands in the blood of the Catholic bishops, and of the Pope, who is a devil in disguise" (Acton "The Protestant Theory of Persecution," in *Essays on Freedom and Power*, 1949, p. 92).

Luther's disciple, Melancthon, like his master, also taught that dissenting sects ought to be put down by the sword, and that any person who started new opinions ought to be punished with death. He taught that the state is morally obligated to persecute heretics because dissent from orthodoxy is a crime, which is to be declared by the clergy and punished by the prince (Acton, pp. 103-105).

When John Calvin established his theocracy in Geneva he used the state to enforce the will of the church. In his "community of saints," absence from the sermon was a crime, and to miss the partaking of the Lord's Supper was penalized by banishment for a year. Criticism of the so-called clergy was included in the crime of blasphemy, and blasphemy was punishable by death. Indeed, according to Calvin and his close associate Beza, denial that blasphemy is punishable by death was itself the equivalent of blasphemy. They said, "Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death, will, knowingly, incur their very guilt" (Bates, p. 157).

In his passion to destroy heresy, Calvin did not hesitate to cooperate with the Inquisition. When Servetus was tried by the Inquisition in France, Calvin furnished the Inquisitors with evidence that helped to secure his condemnation. Servetus escaped to Geneva, where he was denounced by Calvin and sentenced to death by the town council (Bates, p. 157).

When Henry IV of France issued his famous Edict of Nantes which assured the Huguenots freedom of conscience, and the right to worship publicly in specified regions, Clement VIII branded the edict as "the most accursed thing that can be imagined, whereby liberty of conscience is granted to everybody, which is the worst thing in the world" (Pfeffer, p. 24).

Lord Bryce of England maintains that half the wars of Europe, half the internal troubles that have vexed European countries, have arisen from theological differences or from rival claims of church and state (See *American Commonwealth*, Vol. II, p. 763).

The church-state concept was not confined to Europe. Before the adoption of our Constitution we had a union of church and state in our own country. The Puritans who governed Massachusetts said they came to New England to establish a Bible commonwealth, a community "under a due form of government both civil and ecclesiastical." By 1635 the General Court of Massachusetts assumed the power of regulating the affairs of the local churches and passing on the qualifications of preachers and elders. The Court justified its acts on the basis that, "The civil authority . . . hath power and liberty to see the peace, ordinances, and rules of Christ observed in every Church, according

to His word . . . It is the duty of the Christian magistrate to take care that the people be fed with wholesome and sound doctrine" (*The Rise of Religious Liberty in America*, by Sanford H. Cobb, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1902, p. 174).

The Puritans took their church-state doctrine to the point of persecuting those who disagreed with them. They adopted a series of legislative acts against the "cursed sect of heretics which are commonly called Quakers" and their "pestilent heresy." Under these laws, any Quaker coming into the colony was to be thrown into jail, whipped with twenty stripes, and kept at work until banished or transported (Cobb, p. 216). A group of king's commissioners sent from London to investigate conditions in the colonies reported in 1661 that, "Puritans have put many Quakers to death, of other provinces. First they banished them as Quakers upon pain of death, and then executed them for returning. They have beaten some to jelly and been exceedingly cruel to others" (*History of Bigotry in the United States*, by Gustavus Myers, New York, Random House, 1943, p. 5).

The religious wars which plagued Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries were a matter of history when America declared its independence from the Old World, but their memory was still vivid in the minds of the Constitutional Fathers. As the United States Supreme Court has expressed it: "The centuries immediately before and contemporaneous with the colonization of America had been filled with turmoil, civil strife, and persecution, generated in large part by established sects determined to maintain their absolute political and religious supremacy. With the power of government supporting them, at various times and places, Catholics had persecuted Protestants, Protestants had persecuted Catholics, Protestant sects had persecuted other Protestant sects, Catholics of one shade of belief had persecuted Catholics of another shade of belief, and all of these had from time to time persecuted Jews. In efforts to force loyalty to whatever religious group happened to be on top and in league with the government of a particular time and place, men and women had been fined, cast in jail, cruelly tortured, and killed. Among the offenses for which these punishments had been inflicted were such things as speaking disrespectfully of the views of ministers of government-established churches, non-attendance at those churches, expressions of non-belief in their doctrines, and failure to pay taxes and tithes to support them" (People ex rel. Everson vs. Board of Education, 330 U. S. 1 (1947)).

This statement of our Supreme Court sums up the entire history of church-state relations in Europe up to the time our Constitution was adopted. It points up the fact that, with minor exceptions, the history of church-state relationships was a history of persecution, oppression, hatred, bloodshed and war, all in the name of the God of Love and of the Prince of Peace. It also displays the unscrupulous use of religion by secular powers to promote their purposes and policies, and the willing acceptance of that rule by the guardian of religion in exchange for the favors and benefits which ambitious princes conferred in exchange for religion's invaluable service.

It is with this background in mind that our founding fathers wrote our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They did not want a repetition in this country of what had happened in Europe and so they carefully withheld from the new national government any power to deal with religion. As James Madison said, the national government had no "jurisdiction" over religion or any "shadow of right to intermeddle" with it.

But the people in several states, knowing the dangers involved in a union of church and state, would not ratify the Constitution until they were promised that an amendment would be added which specifically forbade any connection between church and state. The very first amendment they added to the Constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

As one great American jurist has said: "The manifest object of the men who framed the institutions of this country, was to have a State without religion and a Church without politics—that is to say, they meant that one should never be used as an engine for the purposes of the other . . . For that reason they built up a wall of complete and perfect partition between the two" (*Essays and Speeches*, Jeremiah C. Black, New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1885, p. 53).

Mr. Justice Rutledge of the Supreme Court says, "We have staked the very existence of our country on the faith that complete separation between the state and religion is best for the state and best for religion" (Pfeffer, p. 476).

This observation of Justice Rutledge is substantiated by the facts. Under our system of mutual independence of church and government, religion has flourished in this country to an extent unparalleled elsewhere. By 1830 Alexis de Tocqueville, the French student of American institutions, could say that "there is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America" (*Democracy in America*, by Alexis de Tocqueville, 1851, I, p. 332).

Lord Bryce of England says, "the influence of Christianity seems to be . . . greater and more widespread in the United States than in any part of western continental Europe, and I think greater than in England" (Bryce, II, p. 561).

Philip Schaff, the church historian, says, "The American nation is as religious and as Christian as any nation on earth, and in some respects even more so, for the very reason that the profession and support of religion are left entirely free" (Philip Schaff, "Church and State in the United States," *Papers of the American Historical Society*, 1888, p. 137).

The principle of separation of church and state has long been recognized as the chief glory of the American Republic. Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson has stated in his thought-provoking book, *The Great Tradition of the American Churches*: "Separation of church and state has

the additional virtue of guaranteeing the freedom of a church to be a church, to determine its own life, and to appeal to a 'higher law' than the statutory enactments of the state. For this reason alone, if for no other reason, the separation of church and state ought resolutely to be guarded" (p. 262).

But the best evidence of our forefathers' wisdom in separating church and state lies in the simple statistics that whereas in 1790 not more than one out of eight Americans and possibly as few as one out of twenty-five belonged to any church, today at least one out of every two Americans is a church member (Pfeffer, p. 148).

In contrast with this picture in America, I have just received a letter from one of our missionaries in Germany which paints a different picture. The missionary says, "We have two main and great bodies of religious people: the Catholics and the Lutherans which are both state churches. That means that a church tax of 10% of your income tax is deducted from the monthly wage and goes either to the Catholic or Lutheran church depending on the employee's confession. Church buildings are built and paid for by the state out of this fund and the pastors or priests are paid by the state. A little more than 50% of the population of Germany belongs to the Lutheran and Protestant groups, the rest is Catholic. Although very many people pay their church tax and are sprinkled as infants, married as grownups and buried by their respective church, which they very seldom visit after their first communion or their confirmation, it is only an extremely low percentage of German people who are active members of any church in the sense that they go to church on Sundays. Only 10% go to church at all and maybe half of those go more than once a year. This presents, of course, a completely different situation from the U.S.A., where a much greater part of the people are church-going people" (Letter to Highland Church of Christ from Rene Chenaux-Repoud).

When we consider the good fruit which has been borne in this country by the separation of church and state, we wonder why anyone could clamor for a union of the two. However, subtle efforts are being made to bring about such a union, and we plan to study those efforts in our next lesson.

Wherever the church or state seeks to use the other as an engine for its own purpose—that is, wherever a state or church pierces the wall of separation between them—religious freedom inevitably disappears. Leo Pfeffer, in his book *Church, State, and Freedom*, observes that Mussolini found no difficulty in according state support to religion, for he effectively used the church as an engine for his purposes. The Soviet government finds no difficulty in conferring on its church state support, for it also uses the church as an engine for state purposes. Conversely in Spain, another totalitarian state, the church uses the state as an engine to further its own purposes" (p. 122).

By the use of state machinery the state church of Spain will not permit the members of minority religious groups to perform any acts

which can be considered the public exercise of their religion. The chapels used by these groups may not display any exterior evidence that they are places of worship. They may not advertise their existence—not even by a bulletin board. They may not be listed in the public directories, and generally must be situated in narrow side streets. They may not publish or import Bibles or other religious books for general circulation, and they must secure special permits to print such books for their own use. They may not open new churches or reopen closed ones without specific license, and the license may be, and often is, refused without stated reason. Public religious demonstrations, proselytizing and propagandizing are forbidden (See New York Herald Tribune, February 23, 1949; Garrison, p. 1234, Religious News Service, May 17, 1949; The Christian Century, August 23, 1952, p. 966; Religious News Service, June 19, 1950).

Jews in Spain are regarded as less of a menace than Protestants, but are subject to substantially the same restrictions of their religious liberty. Private worship is unrestricted, but public worship and exterior signs on synagogues are forbidden. Official permits to open new synagogues are required, and these are frequently withheld (Bates, p. 20; The Tablet, February 4, 1950, p. 1).

An article in a recent issue of Look Magazine appraises the situation in Spain in these words, "Freedom of speech, press, assembly and worship are not tolerated. There is no habeas corpus. Trial by jury is neither prompt nor fair. Laws are decreed, not voted. Force rules" (Vol. 15, No. 3, January 30, 1951).

A church-state tie-up always implies the use of force because a state exists to maintain the law forcibly. If the church does not intend to use the state as an instrument to enforce its will, why should it be tied to the state?

"In America it has been demonstrated that organized religions, although differing greatly from each other, may not only exist but actually flourish side by side in a free society with no effective threat to democratic government and without government support or control.

"Likewise it has been demonstrated that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people can govern a free society without including organized religions in its concern. History has demonstrated the advantages that accrue to a nation—its government and its people—where separation of church and state exist, and where religion is voluntary" (Signs of the Times, November 10, 1953).

On the basis of Scripture, and the American experiment, we must conclude that religious liberty is most secure where church and state are completely separated.

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

Radio Sermon No. 220

April 15, 1956

In writing to the Christians in Rome the apostle Paul said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:1-4).

This Scripture sets forth the divine origin of the state, and the purpose of civil government. God ordained the powers that be to maintain peace, and to protect the rights of every citizen.

It is our obligation as Christians to obey respectfully the law of the land. The Lord says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God" (I Peter 2:13-15). In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul said, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2:1, 2).

The state has every divine right to maintain law and order for the sake of good government and for the benefit of all its citizens. However, the Lord does not give the state the right to force the conscience of any man. In the first century the higher powers tried to stop the apostles from preaching, but these ambassadors of Christ replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

As Thomas Jefferson has said, "The care of every man's soul belongs to himself. But what if he neglect the care of it? Well, what if he neglect the care of his health or estate, which more clearly relate to the state. Will the magistrate make a law that he shall not be poor or sick? Laws provide against injury from others, but not from ourselves. God Himself will not save men against their wills . . ." (Church, State, and Freedom, by Leo Pfeffer, 1953, p. 94).

But Jefferson's most eloquent defense of religious liberty and separation of church and state is found in his Notes on Virginia. He wrote, "Our rulers can have no authority over such natural rights, only as we have submitted to them. The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our

God . . . Reason and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error" (Pfeffer, p. 94).

The apostles of Christ, who were guided by the Holy Spirit, were obedient citizens, but they would not bow to the state when its decrees were in conflict with the expressed will of God. They never put the church into politics, and they never allowed politics in the church. They subscribed to the principle of the mutual independence of religion and political government, and they never commingled the sacred with the secular. Not one time did they ever suggest that the church should dominate the state, or that the state should dictate to the church. The Lord guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13), and their attitude should be our attitude.

Our founding fathers learned from the Bible and from secular history that the church and state should be separate, and so they provided for separation in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In the Everson case in 1947 and in the McCollum case in 1948 the Supreme Court stated that the First Amendment was intended to erect a "wall of separation between church and state" (330 U.S. 1, 333 U.S. 201). But this statement has been severely criticized by some church spokesmen as a "negative, ill-defined, basically un-American formula" (*America*, Feb. 15, 1947). Robert Cannon, former president of Fordham University, in an address delivered in St. Louis in November 1951, used the phrase "the current fraud of separation of church and state" (*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, November 6, 1951; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 6, 1951).

It has been said that the Constitution does not uphold the principle of "separation of church and state" because the phrase is not used in that venerable document. It is true, of course, that the phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the Constitution. But it was inevitable that some convenient term should come into existence to verbalize a principle so clearly and widely held by the American people. For example, the phrase "Bill of Rights" has become a convenient term to designate the freedom guaranteed in the first ten amendments, yet it would be the height of folly to say they are not a Bill of Rights just because that phrase does not appear in the Constitution. Similarly, the right to a fair trial is generally accepted to be a constitutional principle; yet the term "fair trial" is not found in the Constitution. To bring the point even closer home, who would deny that "religious liberty" is a constitutional principle? Yet that phrase too is not in the Constitution.

Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, understood that the First Amendment separated church and state for he so stated in a letter. In 1878 the United States Supreme Court quoted this letter, and stated that "Coming as this does from an acknowledged leader of the advocates of the measure, it may be accepted almost as an authoritative declaration of the scope and effect of the amendment" (*Reynolds vs. United States*, 98, U.S. 145).

There is no question about the First Amendment barring a union

of church and state but this wise provision is not endorsed by some of the citizens of other countries. For instance, the textbooks for higher schools in Ireland read: "She (the Church) has expressly declared that the separation of Church from State is an evil, and that she admits it only with a view to avoid greater evil" (*The Irish and Catholic Power* by Paul Blanshard, The Beacon Press, Boston, 1953, p. 127).

Pius IX of Italy condemned such American ideals as the separation of church and state, and religious liberty and public education in his *Syllabus of Errors* published in 1864.

If we retain this precious American heritage we must be ever vigilant and vigorous in its defense. Certain elements in our country are attacking this doctrine. One of our highest placed citizens has said, "the state and church must not have any fences between them" (J. Howard McGrath, in *New York Times*, March 31, 1951, p. 16).

At the 242nd annual Fiesta held at Santa Fe, New Mexico, a high churchman of New York City was a main attraction. His visit to New Mexico included a tour of U. S. Air Force bases at Clovis and Albuquerque. News items referred to him as the "military vicar of the United States" (*Christian Chronicle*, September 9, 1954).

In a recent issue of the *Signs of the Times* the editors say, "As the so-called 'Christian' flag is seen more and more frequently flying beside the Stars and Stripes, so affairs of church and state are becoming gradually more and more interwoven in the United States. Some churches that for decades proclaimed the virtues of complete separation between the spiritual and secular powers are holding out their hands for state support. Others are urging that the barriers between church and state erected by the founding fathers in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights be completely removed. So one of history's most vital lessons is being forgotten" (Volume 80, No. 42, November 10, 1953).

Today great pressure is being brought to bear upon the government, both local and national, to aid the cause of religion. This pressure in many instances is being brought by well-meaning men who desire the strong arm of government to support the activities and ordinances of the church. These demands are either an admission of weakness on the part of the church itself or a desire to secure mastery and domination over others.

The Supreme Court has said in no uncertain terms that "Government may not finance religious groups" (343 U.S. 306), and yet many American citizens continue to clamor for such support. It seems that churchmen would resent, rather than approve, a marriage of God and Mammon. But instead of resentment there is an outcry for a government hand-out.

For years some have demanded that the government support religious education in private and parochial schools, but the Supreme Court says a state can no more "aid all religions" than it can aid one. If it is ever admitted that public funds may be used for religious

schools,—may God forbid the day—there will inevitably follow conflict and rivalry among the sects as to how the funds are to be divided. The public officials responsible for the division will be subjected to unceasing pressure from religious groups, and these will exert every effort to elect to those offices members of their faith on whom they can rely for generous treatment. We may then have in this country a Catholic Party, a Jewish Party, and an Episcopalian Party.

If one religious group may receive public funds for its parochial schools, so may every other religious sect. The inevitable result of this course would be the destruction of the public school system. This very thing is happening in the Netherlands. According to a statement made by the Dutch Minister of Education, when the system of state support for religious schools was instituted, four out of every five schools in the country were publicly controlled. After about eighty years of state support for parochial schools, the proportion was reversed; four out of every five schools had been withdrawn from the public system and were privately controlled (Church, State, and Freedom, by Leo Pfeffer, p. 51).

A determined effort is now being made to secure free textbooks and free transportation for parochial school children. If this effort is successful it will be the opening wedge for more tax support. If free textbooks are obtained for parochial schools, why not supplies, equipment, school buildings, and why not the salaries of teachers?

Some religious groups in our country are demanding an established denominational school system, in spite of the Constitution. In some instances these groups have incorporated their parochial schools into the public school system by the simple expedient of packing the school board. Under this plan the church rents its school buildings to the public authorities, and the state pays the salaries of the teachers, provides free textbooks, transportation and other benefits. The same religious teachers are used, and the same religious instruction is given. As one religious leader has said, "The pupils of our schools have lost none of the benefits they enjoyed in the previous years but have been given additional ones" (Pfeffer, p. 451). And yet these schools are supported by the state, and this arrangement goes under the guise of public education!

In Dixon, New Mexico, a few years ago a new public school was built with the aid of WPA funds, and it was to this school that about half the people sent their children. That is, they sent their children until one day it was closed without notice and all the children transferred to the parochial school. The public school building was abandoned and allowed to decay.

The situation in Dixon in 1948 was more or less typical of that in other communities. The transfer of the public school to the church building was not accompanied by any physical change in the buildings or classrooms. Public school classes began officially at nine in the morning; but the school buses arrived regularly in time for religious services at half past eight. All children were required to attend

these services or stay outside the building—even in the winter and in inclement weather—until the building officially opened at nine for public school purposes.

As a result of this situation in New Mexico a long trial was held, at which some 2,200 pages of testimony were taken. Thereafter a decision was handed down sustaining most of the charges. Both parties appealed to the state supreme court, which in 1951 sustained the lower court, but went further in one respect—it barred the wearing of religious garb by all public school teachers. The court also held that the conducting of tax supported school classes in a building owned by the Church, and used by it as a private or parochial school is in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The court further disclosed "That there is no separation between Church and State as contemplated and required by the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States in 27 named schools in New Mexico" (Zellers vs. Huff, 55 N.M. 501).

Mr. Leo Pfeffer in his scholarly book, *Church, State, and Freedom*, says that by 1937 there were at least 340 parochial schools in the United States operating more or less under the Faribault plan. This means, there were 340 religious schools receiving state support under the guise of public schools. It has been estimated that this number has now reached fifteen hundred!

We have always appreciated the Jewish attitude toward public and private education. The Synagogue Council of America has stated, "We regard the principle of separation of church and state as one of the foundations of American democracy . . . Our opposition to religious instruction within the public school must in no way be interpreted as hostility to religious instruction as such. In Jewish history and tradition religious instruction has always been regarded as a most sacred responsibility. The overwhelming majority of Jewish children voluntarily attend after-hour and Sunday schools conducted by the local Jewish communities where they receive their religious education wholly independent of the public school system. We believe that the responsibility for religious education may not and should not be shared by the public school system . . . The intrusion of sectarianism upon the public school system . . . both threatens the separation of church and state and challenges the traditional integrity of the public schools. That intrusion, if permitted and sanctioned . . . will destroy the institutions which have preserved religious and political freedom in the United States and which have prevented religious warfare in this nation . . ." (Brief Amici Curiae of Synagogue Council of America and National Community Relations Advisory Council in McCollum case, pp. 1, 2).

It is sometimes said that those who oppose state aid to religious schools are atheists, or they have no convictions about the value of such schools. But the Seventh Day Adventists probably have a larger percentage of their children enrolled in their own parochial schools than any other denomination, and yet they are among the most vigorous of all in their opposition to state aid (See Pfeffer, p. 424).

In churches of Christ we have thousands of our children in religious schools at the elementary, high school and college levels, and to the best of our knowledge there is not a member of the church who would accept a dollar of tax money for the support of these schools. My own son is enrolled in one of our religious schools, but I never expect to ask the government to pay his tuition, or provide transportation for him. If I want him to have religious instruction along with his secular subjects, I must pay the bill, and not the state or the federal government.

The Constitution has stood as a barrier to a union of church and state, but that wall is under assault. The battering rams of pressure are being brought to bear upon it. One religious group has strongly intimated that it would change the Constitution, and deny minority religions the right to evangelize. (See *Catholic Principles of Politics*, by Ryan and Boland, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1948, p. 320). The same group hastens to tell us that such intolerance is so improbable and so far in the future that it should not occupy our time or attention.

It is sometimes said that free textbooks and free transportation for parochial school children is such a short step toward a union of church and state that we should not be concerned about it. But we remember the words of James Madison who said, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment upon our liberties." We also remember the words of Mr. Justice Sutherland of the United States Supreme Court, who said, "Do the people of this land—in the providence of God, favored, as they sometimes boast, above all others in the plenitude of their liberties—desire to preserve those carefully protected by the First Amendment: liberty of religious worship, freedom of speech and of the press, and the right as freemen peaceably to assemble and petition their government for a redress of grievances? If so let them withstand all beginnings of encroachment. For the saddest epitaph which can be carved in memory of a vanished liberty is that it was lost because its possessors failed to stretch forth a saving hand while yet there was time" (301 U.S. 103).

CONVERSION OF A BUSINESS WOMAN

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

Radio Sermon No. 221

April 22, 1956

When Paul and Silas had finished their gospel labors in Phrygia and Galatia they planned to go farther into Asia Minor, "but the Spirit suffered them not." The Bible says, "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:8, 9). The vision was God's way of telling Paul that He wanted him to leave Asia, and to take the gospel

into Europe. The divine record reads, "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." Paul and Silas were led by the Spirit, and when they learned that it was God's will that they should preach in Macedonia they said, "immediately we endeavoured to go." They did not hesitate, but their obedience was prompt and cheerful.

They boarded the first ship sailing from Troas to Macedonia, and the Bible says they "came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis." The expression "We made a straight course to Samothracia" is significant, for one cannot make a straight course on a sailing vessel, unless he has a favorable wind; otherwise, he must do what the sailors call tacking. The ship was able to make a straight course because the wind was blowing in the right direction. In this we see the providence of God for it was His will that these men go to Macedonia to preach the gospel.

After two days the little ship landed on the shore of Macedonia at a small village called Neapolis, which means new city. Paul and Silas looked around, but they found no opportunity for preaching the gospel. However, they soon learned that about ten miles in the interior was the famous city of Philippi, rendered famous by the great battle which decided the fate of the Roman Empire. They immediately determined to begin their work in that city.

And so they came to Philippi, and Luke, the inspired penman of Acts, says, "We were in that city abiding certain days." The first days they spent in Macedonia were uneventful days that had to be lived. They did not grow discouraged for they knew there was one day in the midst of certain days that held in its grasp the destiny of souls. And that day came for Paul and his company.

Luke says, "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together" (Acts 16:13). One of the characteristics of a true Christian is to go forth with the gospel. Any member of the church who can take his Christianity with him into a little room, lock the door, and stay there, does not have the genuine religion of Christ. If any of you can sit down in your own home with your wife and children on the first day of the week, absent yourselves from the worship, and still feel comfortable and complacent—you have cause for alarm about the genuineness of your religion! True Christianity refuses to be shut up in the house. It has a social instinct that is never fully satisfied. No sooner does it occupy one field than it demands a larger one; put it into a heart and it demands the neighborhood. Put into a town and it demands the state. Put it into a state and it demands the nation. Put it into a nation and it demands the world. The faithful Christian can never forget the Lord's orders to teach all nations.

In Philippi Paul and Silas were obeying these divine orders when they went out by the river to teach some Jewish women who had

gathered to pray. When they arrived at this prayer-meeting service they sat down and taught the women who had come together. Think of the simplicity of those apostles! Paul did not put up a temporary pulpit; he did not hunt around for means of giving dignity to the meeting. They all sat down on the green grass, or the bare ground, and Paul began to talk; and what a talk it was! No formal sermon, but a plain conversational lesson of the wondrous news of a glorified Redeemer delivered to those pious and godly women.

Not all the women who heard Paul were converted, but Luke says, "A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). There is a vast difference in women. Paul spoke unto the women. The one woman heard; a hundred, it may be, heard nothing.

Every woman who has any important part in the Scriptures is a remarkable one—remarkable for some striking virtues, or for some equally striking vices; and therefore well worthy of our consideration in studying human character. Lydia is no exception. She was a woman of Thyatira, a city in Asia Minor. She is presented to us in the city of Philippi, about three hundred miles away from her home, across land and sea. We find her a business woman, engaged in selling purple cloth. The purple dye was the most costly known to the ancients, and consequently it was never applied to cheap goods. Only the most costly fabrics were dyed purple, and so to be arrayed in purple and fine linen belonged to the rich. The Emperor was sometimes referred to as the man who wore the purple.

Lydia was an enterprising business woman. She was engaged in an honorable business which required considerable capital and great industry on her part. She was a busy woman, but she took the time to hear God's word proclaimed. Did you ever notice how impossible it is to gain the serious attention of an idle person? When one preaches the gospel, he should earnestly covet the privilege of addressing busy people. His words will make no impression on idle souls. If one wants work done, let him go out and find busy people to do it, and then it will be done.

The fact that Lydia had a calling suggests that there is no impropriety in a woman engaging in any worthy business. It is no disgrace for a woman to sell purple, or to do any other honorable work. There is no necessary conflict between business and Christianity, as some imagine. A business woman may be a praying woman. There are some people who stay out of the church because they imagine they cannot succeed in business and be a Christian. This is a woeful mistake; any business that is incompatible with Christianity is a bad business, and any method of doing business that is contrary to Christian principles is a false method. True and lasting success in business can only be had through the application of Christian principles to business methods.

Lydia was religious. A woman is never so much a woman as when she lifts her soul to God. A vain, frivolous, godless woman is an inconsistent sight, a sort of discord in the harmony of nature. Such a person calls forth our profound regret. When a woman turns her back on Christ she is, indeed, a sad picture of ingratitude, for He has done more to elevate her and to give her the privileges that properly belong to her, than anyone who ever stood upon this earth.

We are told in the very brief Biblical account of Lydia that she worshiped God. Scholars say that no one in Philippi worshipped God, except as the result of Jewish education and training. All the others were heathen. Lydia, then, was either a Jewess of Thyatira, or one of those devout women who, having attended the Jewish synagogue, had been made a convert to the Jewish faith.

At the time we are introduced to Lydia, it was the Jewish Sabbath day. In this heathen city of Philippi, and all over the world, the Sabbath day was unknown, except among the Jews and the proselytes of the Jewish religion. In this city Lydia was engaged in a business which was pursued, most probably, by many others in Philippi, but while the other dealers in purple goods were likely busy on the Sabbath day, she closed her shop regardless of the demands of competition. Lydia was not a woman with a rubber conscience. When the Sabbath day came, her house of business closed, and it remained closed all day long. There was no back door into her store. Although there was no synagogue in Philippi in which to worship, and no male Jews to conduct the Sabbath worship, she and her women employees always left the noisy city, and spent the holy day in prayer on the bank of the river. Such fidelity to God, under circumstances so unfavorable, is not often witnessed in our day. It was observed from on high, and it met with reward.

God saw the faithfulness of Lydia and He turned Paul and Silas from Asia, and sent them to Macedonia that she might believe in Christ and learn the way of salvation. When these servants of God preached to Lydia she listened, and the Lord opened her heart. This latter statement has attracted to itself especial attention. It has puzzled many. Have you ever raised the question, what was the defect in Lydia's heart which required the Lord to open it? A friend of mine once put that question to a gentleman with whom he was conversing, and his friend said, "Why, of course, Lydia was totally depraved, and it required a direct divine influence upon her dead soul to awaken her so that she could hear the word of the Lord with profit." My friend replied, "Sir, you are not well acquainted with Lydia for the Lord describes her high and holy character as such that would put many Christian women of the present day to shame."

And yet the divine statement that the Lord opened Lydia's heart implies that in some way it had been closed. It was certainly not closed by the hardness of a sinful life, or by inherited depravity; for such a supposition is forbidden by the steadfastness with which she had clung to the worship of God. Her heart was closed through religious prejudice. Every Jew, and every Jewish proselyte, was at

that time wedded to the belief that the coming Christ would establish an earthly kingdom. As a result his heart was tightly closed against the conception of a crucified Christ, whose reign as a king is purely spiritual. It was this belief that had caused most of the Jews to reject the Christ while He was still on earth, and it continued to be their "stumbling block" (I Corinthians 1:23).

Perhaps we can understand what the Lord did when He opened Lydia's heart if we remember that the Bible "heart" is often the mind." When Jesus had said to the man sick of palsy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," the scribes present said that He blasphemed; but "Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matthew 9:4). This Scripture proves without any doubt that Jesus used the word "heart" in the sense of the mind, the faculty with which one reasons. The heart, the mind, has many affections—as love and hatred; but the heart is the thinking power of man.

To open the heart means to teach, to enlighten, to impart instruction and information. The word "opened" is used several times in the New Testament, and it is used both literally and figuratively. Literally, it means to open any object such as the eyes, or a door. Figuratively, it means to open the heart or mind by imparting light or instruction. This is the sense in which the Lord opened Lydia's heart.

There has been much speculation about how the Lord opened her heart. Many people, as soon as they read this statement, imagine a direct exercise of God's power upon the heart. But it was not opened that way. The Lord did not send the Holy Spirit to open Lydia's heart, but He sent the Spirit to lead Paul and Silas to her. They preached the gospel to her, and the Lord opened her heart through His word, as spoken by His messengers. As Dr. J. R. Graves said in his paper, *The Baptist*: "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia by bringing facts, truths, before the mind and the heart . . . He opens the heart by the instrumentality of His word" (Page 524; quoted in *Hardeman-Bogard Debate*, p. 39).

The question might be asked, What need had Lydia of being changed at all? Would not she go to heaven if she died as she was? Perhaps so, if Christ had not been crucified and ascended into heaven, and if the divine law had not gone forth that men should believe in Him and obey Him, in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins, and life everlasting. But such a law had been the established order of heaven for several years, and it was necessary that Lydia hear of Christ, believe in Him and obey Him to be saved.

The inspired remark, that the Lord opened Lydia's heart so that she attended to the things spoken by Paul, is very commonly understood to mean that the opening of her heart enabled her to listen favorably to the gospel which Paul preached, but this is a mistake. The Bible text reads differently. The first statement about her is that Lydia "heard us." This included the fixing of her attention upon all that was said. The second statement is, "the Lord opened her heart."

This was subsequent to her hearing. Then the third statement is, that she "gave heed to the things that were spoken of Paul."

Religious scholars say, "The Greek verb here rendered 'to give heed' means, in some connections, to fix the mind upon a matter, and in others, to put something in practice. Here it cannot mean the former, for Lydia had already fixed her mind upon the preaching, as is declared in the words, 'a certain woman named Lydia heard us.' She first heard, then the Lord opened her heart, and then she gave heed to the things which Paul had spoken. The meaning, is, that she put in practice the things spoken by Paul. What these things were, Luke has told us so often that he does not reiterate them here, but he indirectly shows that baptism is one of them by the way in which he mentions her observance of that ordinance. He says, 'and when she was baptized,' implying that this was one of the things that she gave heed to. We know that in preaching to such persons Paul always directed them to believe the gospel, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized; and if Lydia gave heed to the things which he spoke, she did these three things" (J. W. McGarvey, *Commentary on Acts*, Vol. II, p. 91).

It is sometimes suggested that baptism is not essential to salvation since we are saved by the blood of Christ. But the blood of our Lord is in every divine command and condition of salvation. To reject any one of these conditions given in the gospel plan of salvation is to reject God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. It is to reject the power and wisdom of all heaven combined.

When Lydia heard the gospel her heart was opened and she bowed in submission to God's will. Have you ever felt in your heart something like an opening sensation, while you have listened to the earnest presentation of the gospel? Or, when in the silent, quiet hour, you have read in your New Testament some of the teachings of Jesus, some of the earnest, burning words of those faithful apostles, have you not felt a sensation within like the expansion of your heart? Your heart has been closed through sin. It must be opened, by removing the power of sin which closes it in selfishness and worldliness, and by putting within it the expanding love of God and humanity, if you are to be saved.

Have you ever felt that God was working with you as He worked on Lydia? And why did not you attend to the things that were told you to do, as Lydia did? Why have you postponed and neglected your duty? Ah, when you felt your heart beginning to open, you exerted all the strength of your will to close it. You resisted the living God; and hence you are now where you were then; and not until you cease thus to close up the heart that God would open, is there any chance for your soul's salvation. Will you cease that effort now? Do you feel in any way drawn toward Christ and toward God at this moment? We beg you in Jesus' name to hesitate no longer, but let your heart fly wide open, and take in all the precious love of God and Christ. Obey Him with a true heart in full assurance of faith, while you have the opportunity.

IS THE BIBLE FILLED WITH ERRORS?

By JAMES D. WILLEFORD

Radio Sermon No. 222

April 29, 1956

In February 26, 1952 a national magazine carried an article entitled *The Truth About The Bible*. This article states, "A study of the New Testament now in progress indicates that much of it—including portions we think of as the very heart of the Bible—was inserted or changed over the centuries, either deliberately or by mistake. Evidence has been turned up that questions some of the most-quoted statements and happenings in the Scriptures." The subtitle of this article reads, "Students of the Scriptures say the New Testament we read today may have 50,000 errors; here is the story of a far reaching study by leading theologians to get an authentic text" (*Look Magazine*, article by Hartsell Spence).

This article, whether written for that purpose or not, tends to destroy confidence in the Bible as the word of God. It is misleading for it bears the title, *The Truth About The Bible*. Every idea in both the title and the subtitle is designed to make the reader believe that truth is being presented, whereas an examination of the words shows that the "study" has not been completed, the decision not reached, and nothing has been proved. The whole essay rests upon "perhaps," "probably," and "maybe."

Furthermore, the author says that one hundred and twenty-five theologians are making "the first comprehensive effort" to learn the genuine text of the Bible, but this assertion is not true. Hundreds of scholars have been studying for the past two centuries on this very problem, and for the most part they are satisfied that we have an authentic text of the Bible.

Christians owe much to textual critics who have labored honestly through the years in an effort to give us a pure Bible text. We could all wish that our scholars had access to the original letters written by the apostles, but such a wish cannot be fulfilled. The autographed copies have probably perished, and perhaps all the copies made directly from them have disappeared. Scholars say that "Multitudes of the sacred books were hunted and destroyed by the heathen in the various persecutions through which the early church passed" (*Evidences of Christianity* by J. W. McGarvey, p. 26).

It may have been the Lord's will that the original copies of Bible books should perish. For example, we have no portrait of Jesus, and no authentic description of His person. No wood of the cross on which He died remains to our day. It is not difficult to determine the reason why no relics of this kind are left to us. Suppose the original text of the Bible had been miraculously transmitted, in the very handwriting of the authors, and perfect in every letter. The world would have gone mad over it. Idolatry would have accumulated around it. Crusades more bloody and disastrous than those for the recovery of the Lord's sepulchre would have been conducted for its possession. It would

IS THE BIBLE FILLED WITH ERRORS?

Page 27

have darkened the whole history of the Christian religion. Men would have worshiped the letter in flagrant opposition to the spirit of the Sacred Book. Doubtless, it was with a view to counteract this tendency to idolatry and formalism, that the Scriptures are given to us in their present condition.

It brings grave concern to some people to learn that we do not have the original writings of the apostles and prophets, but this knowledge should not alarm us. The Lord said, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established," and He has left three witnesses for us to question about the true text of the Bible. The first witness is the ancient manuscripts.

There are more than three thousand manuscript copies of the New Testament, or parts of it. For no literary production of antiquity is there such a wealth of manuscripts as for the New Testament. Our classical scholars would rejoice were they as fortunate with Homer or Plato, Aristotle or Cicero, as Bible students are with their New Testament. There are several hundred manuscripts of these authors, but scholars say, "Yet even these do not approach the number of witnesses for the text of the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of it, or parts of it, in the original Greek, is over three thousand" (*Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* by Frederic C. Kenyon; Macmillan and Company, New York 1901, p. 3). Scrivener, an English scholar, says, "Now the experience we gain from a critical examination of the few classical manuscripts that survive should make us thankful for the quality and abundance of those of the New Testament. These last present us with a vast and almost inexhaustible supply of materials for tracing the history, and upholding (at least within certain limits) the purity of the sacred text" (*Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* by F. H. A. Scrivener; George Bell and Sons, York Street, Covent Garden and New York, 1894, p. 4).

The books of the New Testament were written in the latter part of the first century, and our earliest manuscripts are of the fourth century—say, from 250 to 300 years later. This may sound like a considerable interval, but it is nothing to that which separate most of the great classical authors from their earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have an accurate text of the seven plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest manuscript upon which it is based was written more than fourteen hundred years after the poet's death. For Plato the interval may be put at thirteen hundred years, for Demosthenes as low as twelve hundred. The great Latin authors are somewhat better off. Horace is represented by several manuscripts written within nine hundred years of his death. Four hundred years separates the original writings of Virgil from the earliest manuscripts we have of his work. And yet very few men ever seriously question the accuracy of the text which we have of their writings.

Due to recent discoveries in Egypt we now have a small fragment of the New Testament which is dated by experts within the first half of the second century, or within half a century of the original writing

of the gospel (See *An Introduction to the New Testament*, by Richard Heard; Harper & Brothers, New York, 1950, p. 23).

The second witness for the purity of our Bible text is the ancient versions. A version, as applied to Scripture, is a translation of the Bible from the original language in which it was written into another tongue. In the first ages of the church the translation of the Scriptures followed immediately on the introduction of Christianity to a nation of a different language. When the gospel spread eastward, a Syriac translation of the New Testament was one of the first monuments of its power. When it spread westward, a Latin version was made that the people might have the Scriptures in their own language.

The Peshito Syriac Version is a translation of both the Old and New Testament into Syriac or Aramean, the language anciently spoken in Northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia. Many evidences combine to prove that it was made in the second century, and that it was therefore derived, as regards the New Testament, from a Greek text which had been transmitted not quite one hundred years from the pens of the original writers.

The Old Latin Version is a translation of the Bible made in the second century, as is known from its being cited by Latin writers as far back as Tertullian, who lived from about 150 to 220 A.D. It was made in North Africa, where the Latin language prevailed, and where there was a vast multitude of Christian converts at a very early date. It was made about the same time as the Syriac version, and they both represent Greek copies two hundred years older than the oldest existing Greek manuscripts.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, an outstanding textual scholar of Great Britain, says, "The earliest Syriac and Latin translations of the New Testament were made somewhere about A.D. 150. Hence, if we can gather from the existing copies of these translations what were the Greek words which their authors were translating, we know what was read in that particular passage in a Greek manuscript current about the year 150, when these translations were made; and this brings us back very near the time when the originals of the New Testament books were themselves written . . . the service of the Versions is that they tap the stream near the fountainhead" (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*; Eyre & Spottiswoode: London, 1948, p. 26).

By taking several versions which originated in isolated parts of the world, and finding what is common to them all, we may be certain that what is common to them all must go back to the earliest times and to their common original. (See *Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*, by Eberhard Nestle; Williams and Norgate, London and New York, 1901, p. 32).

But in addition to the Greek Manuscripts and the versions, we have still a third witness to which we may turn for evidence as to the original text of the Bible—namely, the quotations of isolated Scriptures in the writings of the early scholars. "We possess an uncommonly rich Christian literature, which gathers volume from the second half,

or, at all events, from the last quarter of the first century onwards" (See Nestle, p. 32). Ancient Christian writers were in the habit of quoting the scriptures in their writings very much as we quote them now, and it is clear that every literal quotation made by one of them from the Greek Testament shows the reading in that place of the manuscript which he used. This source of evidence, so far as it can be safely used, is of very great value, and more so from the fact that some of these writers lived at a period preceding the date of our earliest manuscripts.

Textual scholars of undoubted ability say, "We have evidence from versions and the early Christian writers which carry us almost into the apostolic age itself . . . They have established, with a wealth of evidence which no other work of ancient literature can even approach, the substantial authenticity and integrity of the text of the Bible as we now possess it" (*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, by Kenyon, pp. 98, 245).

While scholars testify that "the sacred text has been transmitted to us-virtually unaltered," they are the first to acknowledge that the manuscript copies differ in minor details. When one compares our twelve thousand or more copies of manuscripts, and versions, he will find some 120,000 to 150,000 various readings. A bare statement of the number of various readings in the sacred text is calculated to excite surprise and alarm; but when the character of these variations is considered these feelings quickly subside. Dr. Hort, one of the most competent authorities on the Bible text, declares that in regard to the great bulk of the words of the New Testament there is no variation and no other ground of doubt. He estimates the number of words admitted to the above doubt at not less than seven-eighths of the whole. When of the remaining one-eighth, we leave out mere differences of spelling, the number still left in doubt is about one-sixteenth of the whole; and when we select from this one-sixtieth of those which in any sense can be called substantial variations, their number he says, can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text. That is, only about one-thousandth part of the New Testament is so variously expressed in the various copies as to make any substantial difference of meaning (See *New Testament in Greek*, by Westcott and Hort; Macmillan and Company, Cambridge and London, 1882, p. 2). A. T. Robertson says, "The real conflict in the textual criticism of the New Testament is concerning this 'thousandth part of the entire text'" (*Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*; George H. Doran Company, New York, 1925, p. 22). Ladies and gentlemen, do you know that one-thousandth part of the New Testament is less than one-fourth of a page!

Scholars say, "The various readings (in New Testament manuscripts) consist mainly in differences of Greek orthography; in the form of words not affecting the essential meaning; in the insertion or omission of words not essential to the sense; in the use of one synonym for another; and in the transposition of words whose order in the sentence is immaterial. It is obvious that such variations, however numerous, leave the text uncorrupted as regards its thoughts" (Mc-

Garvey, p. 14). No sane man would deny that the Parthenon was built of marble, even if here and there a speck of sandstone should be detected in its structure.

Professor John W. Haley said in 1874, "The possibility that trivial variations would be found in considerable numbers will be seen when we reflect that, according to Professor Norton's estimate, there were, at the end of the second century, as many as **sixty thousand manuscript copies of the Gospels** in existence. That these variations are of slight importance we have already seen; so that in spite of the 'fifty thousand various readings' of which we are often told, he must be very ignorant or very mendacious who represents the text of the New Testament as in a dubious and unsettled state" (**Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible**; B. C. Goodpasture, Publisher; Nashville, Tennessee, 1951, p. 48).

With reference to these various readings in Bible manuscripts, scholars say, "All these taken together do not change or materially affect any important point of doctrine, precept, or even history" (Professor Stuart in **History of Old Testament Canon**, p. 192; Revised edition, p. 178). "All the doctrines and duties of Christianity remain unaffected" (McGarvey, p. 17). "It is true (and it cannot be too emphatically stated) that none of the fundamental truths of Christianity rests on passages of which the genuineness is doubtful" (**Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts**, by Kenyon, p. 18). Dr. Frederick Scrivener of England quotes Bently, the profoundest and the most daring of English critics, who says, "The real text of the sacred writers . . . is competently exact indeed in the worst MS. now extant; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; choose as awkwardly as you will choose, the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings" (Scrivener, Vol. I, p. 7).

The science of archeology has now become a new witness to the accuracy of our Bible text. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "I believe in the spade. It has fed the tribes of mankind. It has furnished them water, coal, iron and gold. And now it is giving them truth—historic truth—the mines of which have never been opened till our time" (London Academy XXV:442; quoted in **The New Archeological Discoveries**, by Camden M. Cobern; Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York and London, 1922, Fly Leaf).

Scholars say that "the tendency of modern research has been, again and again, to confirm the substantial integrity and trustworthiness of our Bible record" (**Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts**, by Kenyon, p. 29).

Sir Frederic Kenyon says: "The new evidence (from archeology) tends to confirm the general integrity of the text as it has come down to us . . . the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed" (**The Bible and Archaeology**; Harper & Brothers, New York and London, 1940, pp. 288, 289).

In conclusion we are quoting a statement from Sir Frederic Kenyon which should thrill the hearts of all men everywhere. In his book

Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, Professor Kenyon says, "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries" (p. 23).

Modern research is learning that God has kept His promise to preserve His word. In the Old Testament the Lord said, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). Christ promised, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The apostle Peter said, "The word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Peter 1:25).

Our Lord says, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10, 11). God's word was given as His power for saving the souls of men, and His word has never lost its power. It is just as effectual today as it was in the first century. What it did for men then it will do for us now. It led Paul, Cornelius, Lydia and thousands of others to faith in Christ, to genuine repentance, and to baptism for the remission of their sins. As Christ said, they were made "clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Sinner friend, God's word can cleanse your life, and turn it into an everlasting blessing. In view of this great truth, we implore you to "lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Receipts	\$19,481.43
Expenditures	21,634.46

Expenditures Exceed Receipts by \$ 2,153.03

This abbreviated financial statement is being made in order to have the Report printed without delay. Any information other than these figures will be given gladly on request and up-to-date statements printed at regular intervals.

LIBRARY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
ABILENE, TEXAS

HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST
RADIO PROGRAM
Fifth and Highland
P. O. Box 1858
ABILENE, TEXAS

Non-Profit Organization

POSTMASTER:
FORM 3547 REQUESTED

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED